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BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTES.

MODERN SCIENCE AND MATERIALISM. By *Hugh Elliot*. London and New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1919. Pp. 211. Price \$3.00.

"The main purpose of the present work," the author says (pp. 137f), "is to defend the doctrine of materialism. It is, indeed, a materialism infinitely different from that of the ancients, for it makes vast concessions to agnosticism, and it concedes the whole foundation of knowledge to idealism. Yet it remains materialism; for I shall endeavor to show that the whole of the positive knowledge available to mankind can be embraced within the limits of a single materialistic system."

Taking the position that all true philosophy must be based on the facts of science, the author devotes the first three chapters to a résumé of the chief conclusions of astronomy, physico-chemistry and biology, under the headings "The Universe as a Whole," "Matter and Energy" and "Life and Consciousness." A chapter on "The Fallacy of Vitalism," largely concerned with physiological questions, ushers in the philosophic part of the book proper, one chapter on "Materialism" and one on "Idealism." The last two terms are not intended to designate two rival doctrines—in the author's words (p. 14), "the old antithesis between materialism and idealism vanishes completely . . . they are one and the same doctrine, looked at from different aspects and stated in different words."

On the whole, the author's philosophy may be described as an adaptation of the work of Ernst Mach, for while he tries to define his position over against that of Bertrand Russell and especially that of William James (p. 15), it is apparent that all his major theses are contained in the teachings of the great Viennese positivist. Needless to say that this detracts nothing from the value of the book—on the contrary, for Mach's views will be worth spreading for at least a hundred years to come.

If we have any fault to find with the volume before us, it concerns a gap rather than any positive statement, for we find nothing adequate said about the mind-brain relation. The third chapter deals with consciousness only in a few preliminary paragraphs, leading up to the assertion that certain "specific physico-chemical reactions of nerve tissue . . . actually *are* consciousness, in precisely the same way that the specific reactions of protoplasm actually *are* life" (p. 102). Similarly we read on page 122: "What is a state of consciousness? The untrained mind will, of course, immediately hypostatize it, and call it a *thing*. Let us, however, call it a process, and instead of regarding it as a

thin and shadowy accompaniment of certain cerebral processes, let us boldly identify it with those processes, and say that it is one and the same." For proof we are in both cases referred to the final chapter. Now we may be in complete accord with the author's theory, but having read his book from cover to cover we cannot see where he has proven it.

If we identify consciousness with certain cerebral processes, the fact remains that here are two aspects of one thing *x*—to be explored by psychology and the physiology of the nervous system respectively—whose mutual relations seem to be a subject of legitimate inquiry. It is precisely on this question that the author fails to enlighten his readers, the very problem on which the metaphysics which he condemns is thriving to this day. There is not a word in the book, e.g., about Richard Semon's theory of the *mneme*, particularly as applied to the nervous tissue, though on the other hand we find nothing in it, either, to bar the author from accepting this theory. As things are, his own views come dangerously near to inviting the charge of epiphenomenalism (cf. pp. 189f), for if no relation is established between consciousness and cerebral processes, and we can hardly doubt the objective quality of the latter, what else can consciousness be but their despised "accompaniment"?

A few words might be said about the author's polemics against "the confused idea of things existing 'in themselves' as apart from the way in which they appear to us" (p. 181). On page 4 we read: "If, then, all knowledge and all imagination is based on sense-impressions, it is clear that our notion of the universe is bound to remain forever of the most incomplete possible character. Supposing we had a few more senses, how very different everything would appear.... To a being thus endowed, the philosophy of a mere human being must appear indeed primitive.... Yet, though it would so vastly exceed ours, the intellect of even this being would be no nearer than *we* are to the ultimate mysteries of existence...." and so on and so forth. We must leave it to the author to reconcile these two statements; suffice it to say that Kant is *not* touched by his attack.

X. B. N.

THE INTUITIVE BASIS OF KNOWLEDGE. By *N. O. Lossky*. Translated from the Russian by *N. A. Duddington*. London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1919. Pp. xxx, 420. Price, 16s. net.

This work of Professor Lossky falls into two parts: the first, a summary of the problem of knowledge in modern philosophy which is mainly critical, and an examination of the systems of pre-Kantian empiricism and rationalism as presented in the systems of Locke, Berkeley and Hume; the second, Professor Lossky's own solution. He finds the same defect in all the attempts to solve the epistemological problem, which is "the assumption that the knowing subject is isolated from the known object." If knowledge and the known object are isolated from each other, knowledge can only correspond to the known object in the sense that in knowledge a more or less perfect *copy* is found of the known object. But if knowledge is a copy of an original which is external to the process of knowing, experience certainly does not provide us with any criterion for determining the degree of correspondence between the copy and the original. "Indeed, in this case, there are no conclusive grounds for affirming such a correspondence" (p. 31). Consistently carried